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(54) Flip chip underfill system and method

(57) A system (30) for dispensing a viscous material onto a substrate (16) which includes a dispensing element (22), a viscous material reservoir (20) and a metering device (25) coupled between the reservoir (20) and the dispensing element (22) for metering a variable amount of a viscous material through the dispensing element (22). The dispensing element (22) and metering device (25) can be moved by a positioner (32) along a predetermined pattern adjacent a surface of a substrate (16). A weigh scale (52) located adjacent the substrate (16) receives a metered amount of the viscous material and produces signals representative of a variable weight of the material dispensed during a predetermined time interval. A controller (40) adjusts a speed of movement of the positioner (32) along the predetermined pattern to cause the dispensing element (22) to dispense a desired amount of material based on a calculated flow rate. Alternatively, the controller (40) adjusts a rate of delivery based on the calculated flow rate.

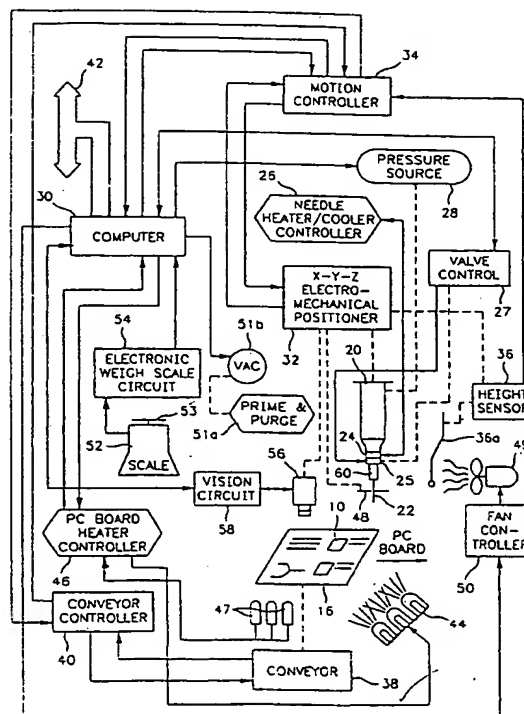


FIG. 5

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Description

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to automated equipment used in dispensing viscous materials. More particularly, the present invention relates to a system and method which in their preferred embodiments may be used for automatically dispensing the underfill epoxy used to attach silicon chips directly to printed circuit ("PC") boards comprising FR4 or similar laminate substrates.

[0002] In the manufacture of PC boards it is frequently necessary to apply small amounts of viscous materials, i.e. those with a viscosity greater than fifty centipoise. Such materials include, by way of example and not by limitation, general purpose adhesives, solder paste, solder flux, solder mask, grease, oil, encapsulants, potting compounds, epoxies, die attach pastes, silicones, RTV and cyanoacrylates. Heretofore the common methods of application have included screening, pin transfer and dispensing from a syringe or valve. Screening requires a template and is not readily adaptable to changing application patterns. Pin transfer is relatively fast but the tooling is expensive and inflexible and can only form dots, not lines. Syringe dispensing is widely used and is accomplished with pneumatic mechanisms, electro-mechanical mechanisms or positive displacement valves.

[0003] In the quest for ever increasing miniaturization of circuitry a fabrication process known as flip chip technology has developed. This technology is also known as direct chip attach or "DCA". It includes "flip chip" bonding, dies attached directly to substrates, wire bonding, coated dies and encapsulated dies. One such process which is widely used is called controlled columnar collapsed connection ("C4") which is covered by U.S. Patents owned by International Business Machines Corporation.

[0004] Referring to the drawings, a semiconductor die or flip chip 10 (Fig. 1) is provided with a pattern of solder bumps or balls 12 on an underside or circuit side thereof. The solder balls 12 are registered with plated solder pads 14 on a PC board or other substrate 16. The underside of the chip 10 is also referred to as the image side of the chip. Flux (not illustrated) is normally supplied between the solder balls 12 and solder pads 14. Upon heating, the solder pads 14 on the PC board or substrate 16 reflow and physically connect with the solder balls 12 on the underside of the chip 10. The solder balls 12 typically have a high melting point and therefore do not re-flow. This connection is illustrated diagrammatically in Fig. 2 by deformed solder pad 14' mating with a solder ball 12. The requirement for wire bonding is thereby eliminated.

[0005] Since the flip chip 10 is not necessarily encapsulated in a plastic or ceramic package, the connections between the PC board 16 and, the chip 10 can corrode. In order to prevent this corrosion, a special liquid epoxy

18 (Fig. 3) is allowed to flow and completely cover the underside of the chip. This is referred to herein as the "underfill operation." Upon curing, the resulting encapsulation forms a non-hygroscopic barrier to prevent moisture from contacting and thus corroding the electrical interconnects between the PC board 16 and the chip 10. The epoxy 18 also serves to protect the bonds between the deformed solder pads 14' and the solder balls 12 by providing thermal stress relief, i.e. accommodating differential rates of thermal expansion and contraction. Stated another way, once cured the epoxy 18 has a co-efficient of thermal expansion ("CTE") which together with its bonding properties minimizes the thermal stress induced by the difference between the CTE of the silicon chip 10 and the CTE of the FR4 PC board 16.

[0006] Advantages of using flip chip on board architecture include: 1) the potential for increased input and output ("I/O") as the entire die area beneath the chip is available for connection; 2) an increase in electronic processing speed due to shorter transmission line lengths; 3) the ability to fit a heat sink to the top of the chip; 4) a substantial reduction in chip profile; and 5) more efficient use of PC board real estate.

[0007] Referring to Fig. 3 of the drawings, once the underfill operation is complete, it is desirable that enough liquid epoxy be deposited to encapsulate all of the electrical interconnections and so that a fillet 18a is formed along the side edges of the chip 10. A properly formed fillet 18a ensures that enough epoxy has been deposited to provide maximum mechanical strength of the bond between the chip 10 and the PC board or substrate 16. If too much epoxy is deposited, a mound 18b (Fig. 4) will be produced which undesirably encircles the side edges of the chip 10 and extends along the upper surface of the chip.

[0008] The aforementioned underfill operation requires that a precise amount of the liquid epoxy 18 be deposited in a more or less continuous manner along at least one side edge of the semiconductor chip 10. The liquid epoxy flows under the chip 10 as a result of capillary action due to the small gap between the underside of the chip 10 and the upper surface of the PC board or substrate 16. If too little epoxy is deposited, some of the electrical interconnections will not be encapsulated. Corrosion may result and thermal stresses may not be relieved. If too much epoxy is deposited, it may flow beyond the underside of the chip and interfere with other semiconductor devices and interconnections. Excess epoxy may also encroach on the upper side of the chip 10 as shown at 18b in Fig. 4 and interfere with proper heat dissipation of a heatsink.

[0009] During the underfill operation, it is necessary to precisely control the temperature of the liquid epoxy or other liquid adhesive. The liquids that are utilized are often stored in a frozen state. They are thereafter thawed and utilized in connection with a dispensing syringe. However the viscosity of this type of adhesive changes rapidly with time as it cures, sometimes dou-

bling within four hours of being thawed. This complicates the task of dispensing the correct amount of fluid, because if its viscosity increases too much, capillary action will not be sufficient to make it completely flow under the chip. Therefore, there is a need to determine when the liquid adhesive has reached the predetermined viscosity that renders it non-useable in an underfill operation.

[0010] In the past PC boards have been heated by conduction through direct mechanical contact, with lamps or with convective heat, i.e. gas flow. Often such heating is performed in belt ovens having successive air zones, the temperature of which can be independently controlled to achieve a given heating profile. It has also been conventional in the dispensing of minute amounts of adhesives and other viscous materials to employ a heater for maintaining the temperature of the dispensing needle and/or valve, and the viscous material therein, at a predetermined level. However, the prior art methods of controlling temperature in the conventional assembly of PC boards have not provided very accurate control of the viscosity.

[0011] Accordingly, it would be desirable to provide an automated viscous material dispensing system and method in which the amount of material dispensed could be precisely controlled, taking into account variations in the viscosity of the material itself.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0012] The present invention provides a system for dispensing a viscous material onto a substrate which includes a dispensing element, a viscous material reservoir and a metering device coupled between the reservoir and the dispensing element for metering a variable amount of a viscous material through the dispensing element. The dispensing element and metering device can be moved by a positioner along a predetermined pattern adjacent a surface of a substrate. A weigh scale located adjacent the substrate receives a metered amount of the viscous material and produces signals representative of a variable weight of the material dispensed during a predetermined time interval. Thus a flow rate of material can be accurately determined. A controller adjusts a speed of movement of the positioner along the predetermined pattern to cause the dispensing element to dispense a desired amount of material based on a calculated flow rate. Alternatively, the controller adjusts a rate of delivery of the metering device based on the calculated flow rate to cause the dispensing element to dispense the desired amount of material along the predetermined pattern. Closed loop temperature control may be provided for the dispensing element and/or the substrate to ensure a substantially constant viscosity and a substantially constant flow rate. A prime and purge station may be provided adjacent the substrate for sucking air bubbles from the dispensing element and metering device.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013] Fig. 1 is a fragmentary diagrammatic side elevation view of a semiconductor flip chip having its solder balls registered with the solder pads of a PC board in accordance with the prior art.

[0014] Fig. 2 is greatly enlarged, fragmentary diagrammatic elevation view showing the interconnection of one of the deformed solder pads of Fig. 1 with its corresponding solder ball after reflow in accordance with the prior art.

[0015] Fig. 3 is a somewhat enlarged, fragmentary side elevation view of the chip and PC board of Fig. 1 illustrating the proper formation of a fillet of adhesive material adjacent the side edge of a chip which has been underfilled with liquid adhesive in accordance with the prior art.

[0016] Fig. 4 is a somewhat enlarged, fragmentary side elevation view of the chip and PC board of Fig. 1 illustrating a mound of liquid adhesive which can undesirably form over the top edge of the chip when an excessive amount of the adhesive is deposited during the conventional underfill process.

[0017] Fig. 5 is a block diagram of the preferred embodiment of our viscous material dispensing system. The phantom connecting lines represent mechanical connections and the solid connecting lines represent electrical connections.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0018] The entire disclosure of pending U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 08/192,709 filed February 7, 1994 and entitled COMPUTER CONTROLLED VISCOUS FLUID DISPENSING SYSTEM is specifically incorporated herein by reference.

[0019] Referring to Fig. 5, our system includes a fluid reservoir in the form of a conventional disposable plastic syringe 20 connected to a dispensing element in the form of a needle 22. The needle 22 is surrounded by a heat sink 24 which includes separate resistive heating and temperature sensing elements (not illustrated). The heat sink 24 may also incorporate a cooling element (not illustrated) such as a Peltier diode. Alternatively, the heat sink may also incorporate a miniature vortex cooling generator which may be coupled to a source of pressurized air hereafter described. One suitable vortex generator is Part No. 3202 commercially available from Exair Corp.

[0020] The syringe 20 (Fig. 5) is coupled to the dispensing needle 22 through a metering device in the form of a conventional auger valve 25. This valve acts as a positive displacement pump and includes a motor driven screw for metering a variable amount of the viscous material inside the syringe through the needle 22. The motor in the auger valve 25 is controlled through a valve control circuit 27 which in turn is connected to a system

computer 30 which indirectly controls the auger valve 25. The heating, cooling and temperature sensing elements in the heat sink 24 are connected to a needle heater/cooler controller circuit 26.

[0021] The syringe 20 is pressurized through its upper end by a source of pressurized air 28 actuated by the system computer 30 for propelling viscous material to the valve 25. The system computer 30 controls the dispensing of viscous material, such as epoxy adhesive, in accordance with a stored operation program. This enables the dispensing of minute amounts of adhesive or other viscous material from the body of the syringe 20 through the needle 22 onto the upper surface of the PC board or substrate 16.

[0022] The syringe 20, valve 25 and needle 22 are mounted for movement along X, Y and Z axes by electro-mechanical components collectively referred to as a positioner 32 in Fig. 5. These components are driven by a motion controller circuit 34 which also communicates with the system computer 30. Mechanisms for rapidly moving the syringe 20 along the X and Y axes are disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 4,967,933 entitled METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR DISPENSING VISCOUS MATERIALS, the entire disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference. A mechanism for moving the syringe along the Z axis, albeit at a much slower rate, is also disclosed in the aforementioned U.S. Patent No. 4,967,933.

[0023] A height sensor 36 (Fig. 5) is mounted to the X-Y-Z positioner 32 so that the needle 22 can be placed a predetermined dispensing height above (or distance away from) the working surface of the PC board or substrate 16. The height sensor 36 includes a vertically reciprocable height sensing arm 36a. The upper end of the arm 36a breaks a light beam when the syringe is moved downwardly toward the PC board 16 by the positioner 32. This indicates to the motion controller circuit 34 that the predetermined dispensing height has been achieved. The arm 36a may be retracted by a solenoid mechanism (not illustrated) which forms a part of the height sensor 36. The height sensor 36 also includes a manually adjustable lead screw mechanism (not illustrated) for adjusting the dispensing height, as needed. Height sensors of the foregoing type are well known and need not be further described herein.

[0024] The PC board or other mounting substrate 16 is transported horizontally beneath the needle 22 by an automatic conveyer 38 as indicated by the horizontal arrow in Fig. 5. The conveyer 38 is of conventional design and has a width which can be adjusted upon demand to accept different sizes of PC boards. The conveyer 38 also includes pneumatically operated lift and lock mechanisms (not illustrated). A conveyer controller 40 is connected to the conveyer 38. The conveyer controller 40 interfaces between the motion controller 34 and the conveyer 38 for controlling the width adjustment and the lift and lock mechanisms of the conveyer 38. The conveyer controller 40 also controls the entry of the PC board 16

into the system and the departure therefrom upon completion of the dispensing of adhesive or other viscous material onto the upper surface of the same.

[0025] Computer automated design ("CAD") data from a disk or a computer integrated manufacturing (CIM) controller (not illustrated) can be utilized by the system computer 30 to control the motion of the positioner 32 and the dispensing needle 22 through the motion controller 34. This ensures that the adhesive or other viscous material being deposited onto the upper surface of the PC board 16 will be accurately placed in the precise amount required. In applications where CAD data is not available, the software utilized by the system computer 30 can allow for the dispensing locations and quantities to be directly programmed. Our system also preferably employs a camera and vision circuit hereafter described to precisely locate the needle 22 relative to the edge of the chip 10.

[0026] The system computer 30 utilizes X and Y locations, component types, and component orientations to determine where and how much adhesive or other viscous material to dispense onto the upper surface of the PC board or substrate 16. The system computer 30 is preferably provided with standard RS 232 and SMDA communications buses 42 which are compatible with most types of other automated equipment utilized in fully automated PC board assembly lines.

[0027] A radiant heat source, such as a plurality of infrared bulbs 44, is energized by a PC board heater controller circuit 46. The actual amount of localized heating of the PC board or substrate 16 in different discrete zones is sensed by a plurality of heat sensors 47 such as IR sensitive thermocouples positioned to accurately detect the temperature of the PC board or substrate 16. A heat shield 48 deflects heat from the bulbs 44 away from the needle 22, heat sink 24 and auger valve 25. The heat shield 48 may comprise a horizontally disposed black anodized Aluminum sheet carried by the positioner 32. The heat shield 48 has a hole through which the needle 22 protrudes. A fan or blower 49 conveys air across the PC board 16 under control of the system computer 30 via fan controller 50 to provide ambient cooling on demand.

[0028] The dispensing needle 22 may be moved to a prime and purge station 51a (Fig. 5) which is connected to a vacuum source 51b controlled by the system computer 30. The prime and purge station 51a includes a resilient valve-like boot (not illustrated) which is pierced by the needle 22 so that it communicates with an interior chamber (not illustrated) upon which a vacuum is pulled by the vacuum source 51b. This also serves to clean the outside of the needle tip. The resilient boot is similar to the resilient valve found on a basketball. A close fitting seal without valve function will also suffice. The prime and purge operation is done prior to the dispensing operation to ensure that all bubbles in the valve 25 and needle 22 are eliminated. Bubbles are particularly undesirable in this type of a system since they can drasti-

cally affect the dispensing accuracy in terms of volume.

[0029] The preferred embodiment of our system also includes a precision electronic weigh scale 52 having a platen 53. The output signals from the weigh scale 52 are fed to an electronic weigh scale circuit 54. This circuit 54 is connected to the system computer 30. By way of example, the weigh scale 52, platen 53 and electronic weigh scale circuit 54 may be collectively provided in the form of a Model No. DI-100 analytical weigh scale commercially available from Denver Instruments. This type of weigh scale utilizes digital circuitry for highly accurate measurements of minute weights, and includes an RS232 interface. It may be desirable, and in some cases necessary, to provide the weigh scale 52 with resilient vibration mounting (not illustrated) to ensure accurate weight measurements. The needle 22 can be moved to the weigh scale 52 by the positioner 32 and a minute amount of adhesive may be deposited onto the platen 53. The system computer 30, through the electronic weigh scale circuit 54, determines the precise amount of the metered viscous material by weight delivered per unit of time. The calculated flow rate is then utilized in the dispensing operation as hereafter described.

[0030] A charge coupled device ("CCD") video camera 56 (Fig. 5) is mechanically connected to the X-Y-Z positioner 32 for travel along with the dispensing needle 22. Its lens is pointed downwardly so that the upper or other working surface of the PC board or other substrate 16 is in its field of view. The camera 56 is electrically connected to a conventional vision circuit 58 for interfacing with the system computer 30. An edge detection algorithm is executed by the system computer 30 to help locate an edge of the chip 10 on the PC board 16 to facilitate positioning of the tip of the needle 22 adjacent at least one side edge thereof. Preferably in one continuous operation the needle 22 is moved in an L-shaped pattern to dispense liquid epoxy along two adjacent side edges. A second L-shaped pass of the needle 22 along the remaining two side edges is performed. It is called a perimeter fill and ensures that a proper fillet 18a extends around the entire periphery of the die 10. This complete fillet 18a aids in the mechanical strength of the chip-to-board bond..

[0031] The preferred embodiment of our system illustrated in block diagram form in Fig. 5 comprises a plurality of mechanical, electronic and electro-mechanical components which are preferably mounted on an upright, open rectangular steel frame as generally illustrated in Fig. 1 of the aforementioned pending U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 08/192,709. The frame can be inserted into any modern fully automated PC board assembly line. The system computer 30 may be any commercially available extended industry standard architecture ("EISA") personal computer with sufficient memory and processing capability to rapidly carry out the required interface and command functions described herein.

[0032] The preferred embodiment of our viscous fluid dispensing system may be utilized to perform the preferred embodiment of our method as follows. Once the closed loop temperature of the heat sink 25 has stabilized the system computer 30 causes the positioner 32 to move the needle 22 to the prime and purge station 51a. The needle 22 is plunged into the resilient valve or close fitting seal of the station 51a. The vacuum source 51b is energized to suck any air bubbles out of the viscous material inside the auger valve 25 and the needle 22. The system computer 30 then causes the positioner 32 to withdraw the needle 22 from the prime and purge station 51a and move it to the weigh scale 52. A small amount of viscous material is deposited onto the platen 53 of the weigh scale 52. This small amount is variable depending on the viscosity, even though the auger valve 25 may be energized for a predetermined time interval at a predetermined speed. The duration of the deposit, as indicated by the amount of time the motor of the auger valve 25 is energized, and the measured weight, are utilized to calculate a volumetric flow rate.

[0033] The system computer 30 then causes the PC board 16 to be pulled along a predetermine path by the conveyer 38 above the infrared lamps 44. The lower surface of the PC board 16 is heated to a predetermined elevated temperature. This temperature is precisely controlled by the system computer 30 through the PC board heater controller 46 which monitors the surface temperature at different zones through the heat sensors 47. The upper surface of the PC board is correspondingly heated in discrete zones by conduction through the board. Using pre-programmed component location data and/or the vision sub-system and pre-programmed pattern and dispensing amount data, the system computer 30 moves the dispensing needle 22 to one side edge of the chip 10 which is to receive the underfill operation. The needle 22 is lowered to place its lower end at the predetermined dispensing height, e.g. seven mills, above the upper surface of the PC board 16 utilizing the height sensor 36 and the X-Y-Z positioner 32. The system computer 30 then causes the needle 22 to move along two adjacent side edges of the chip 10. Simultaneously the auger dispensing valve 25 is momentarily energized to dispense viscous material, in the form of an epoxy adhesive, onto the PC board 16 so that it wicks under the chip 10. The speed of the movement of the syringe 20 and the needle 22 along the X and Y axes is precisely controlled to deposit or lay down a predetermined desired quantity of adhesive based upon the calculated flow rate. This desired quantity of adhesive is sufficient to ensure that each of the solder ball-to-solder pad connections of the flip chip 10 is encapsulated with liquid epoxy. The amount of adhesive is enough to form the fillet 18a (Fig. 3), but not the undesirable mound 18b (Fig. 4).

[0034] Preferably our system periodically moves the needle 22 to the prime and purge station 51a to expel viscous material in the needle after a predetermined idle

time. This material may have cured too much. Preferably our system also periodically moves the needle 22 to the weigh scale 52 for re-calculation of the flow rate and adjusts the speed of movement of the needle as needed to ensure the delivery of a desired amount of material. Mass flow is determined on a closed loop basis.

[0035] It will thus be understood that in our system, the flow rate of the auger valve 25 is first determined while the heat sink 24 is maintained at a predetermined substantially constant temperature by the closed loop syringe heater/cooler controller circuit 26. This holds the viscosity of the material substantially constant. The system computer 30 assumes that there will be a predetermined flow rate during energization of the auger valve 25. The drive speed of the auger valve 25, and thus the flow rate therefrom, are maintained substantially constant and are not continuously adjusted. Instead, the system computer 30 adjusts the X-Y translating speed of the needle 22 to dispense the appropriate amount of liquid epoxy that will achieve optimum underfill. Alternatively, the speed of the auger valve 25 may be continuously adjusted while maintaining a predetermined fixed speed of translation of the needle 22 over the PC board.

[0036] Our system takes an initial measurement at the weigh scale 52 to determine the dispensing flow rate. It need not adjust the valve 25, but instead adjusts the speed of movement of the dispensing needle 22 in the X-Y plane to ensure that the desired amount of adhesive is dispensed. Optimum heating of the particular surface region of the PC board 16 with the bulbs 44 ensures that the epoxy adhesive will wick or flow completely underneath the chip 10. The bulbs 44 rapidly heat the lower surface of the PC board once it is brought into position by the conveyor 38.

[0037] The PC board 16 preferably needs to be heated up to a set point of approximately eighty degrees C. in less than thirty seconds and maintained at that temperature. The temperature of any portion of the PC board 16 which will come into contact with the liquid epoxy adhesive must be closely maintained, i.e. within plus or minus five degrees C. of the foregoing set point. Infrared ("IR") vacuum heater bulbs 44 are preferably utilized to heat the PC board 16 to enable all our system to achieve this objective. Such bulbs can come up to full temperature in approximately 1.4 seconds, allowing them to be used in a closed loop fashion where it is desired to rapidly achieve the set point, e.g. in thirty seconds or less. The non-contact heat sensors 47 are important components of the closed loop temperature control of the PC board 16. The design of the PC board heater controller circuit 46 will be readily understood by those skilled in the art, and its details need not be described herein.

[0038] Preferably, our system is able to closely control the weight of the fluid dispensed, e.g. to within plus or minus ten percent of a target for a given chip. The analytical weigh scale 52 is used to periodically measure the flow rate from the auger valve 25. The speed of the

dispensing needle 22 in the X-Y plane is precisely controlled so that the desired weight (amount) of epoxy adhesive is deposited.

[0039] The valve 25 uses a motor to rotate an auger screw which in turn pushes viscous fluid or material through the dispensing needle 22. An indication of the viscosity of the fluid may be obtained by measuring the torque of the motor of the auger screw valve. Since the fluid is in contact with the walls of the valve and the auger screw the viscosity of the fluid affects the resisting torque. The torque can be monitored to indicate that the viscosity of the material has risen too high, e.g. due to partial curing, to underfill the chip. Circuits which may be incorporated into the valve control circuit 27 for monitoring the motor torque by sensing the back electromotive force ("EMF") of the motor coils are well known and need not be described in detail herein.

[0040] The auger valve 25 is preferably a hardened-steel, auger screw, rotary positive displacement pump that incorporates the disposable needle 22 and an automatic cleaning system which eliminates the need for valve removal and disassembly. One suitable valve is the ASYMTEK (Trademark) Model No. DV-06 commercially available from Asymptotic Technologies, Inc. of Carlsbad, California, the assignee of the subject application. Prior to dispensing, the system moves the valve 25 and needle 22 so that the height sensor 36 can automatically locate the height of the needle tip. The system then moves the needle 22 to the prime and purge station 51a.

[0041] The valve 25 includes a direct drive motor. The back EMF on the valve 25 is continually monitored by the valve control circuit 27. This enables the valve to be dynamically adjusted. As the fluid changes in viscosity it tends to slow the motor. By measuring the back EMF the valve control circuit 27 increases the power to the motor to maintain a consistent motor speed within one percent and thereby achieves a substantially constant fluid flow rate.

[0042] Our system preferably places the PC board 16 at three locations: 1) a preheat zone; 2) a dispense heat zone; and 3) a post heat zone. The conveyor 38 includes automatic width adjustment capabilities to accommodate a variety of PC board sizes. Underboard support rails (not illustrated) for thin substrates may be incorporated into the conveyor 38. The width, speed and dwell time of the conveyor 38 are fully programmable.

[0043] The repeatable success of the underfill process depends on exact thermal management of the PC board or substrate 16, the fluid and the general system environment. Substrate heating at all zones is preferably effected through the use of ultra-fast IR heating bulbs 44 capable of ramping to full temperature within two seconds. Each heat zone preferably consists of three heat sectors, utilizing two bulbs per sector. The zones are preferably monitored by three corresponding IR thermocouples. Each thermocouple is capable of sensing the average temperature of an area beneath the PC board

that is approximately one inch in diameter. Closed loop substrate temperature control is accomplished with heat sensors 47 monitored through software.

[0044] The temperature control of our system can achieve programmable ramp rates in excess of four degree C per second. Since the PC board or other substrate 16 is heated from below, the temperature ramp rates at the top of the PC board and the gradient from top to bottom depend on the substrate's thickness and thermal conductivity. Thus, for thin PC boards such as an .018 inch thickness FR-4 board, the top of the PC board will be at optimum heat in about twenty seconds, while a thicker material such as .040 inch thickness FR-4 PC board will take longer, i.e. about forty seconds. The measured temperature uniformity over the PC board's dispensed area is preferably plus or minus five degrees C.

[0045] Thermal management of the epoxy adhesive involves controlling its temperature at two locations: 1) within the valve; and 2) at the dispense point. The viscous fluid within the valve 25 must be maintained at close to ambient temperature, normally twenty-seven degrees C. This is partially achieved by use of the metal heat shield 48 which surrounds the valve 25, a phenolic heat shield 60 surrounding all but the lower end of the needle 22 and laminar flow cooling around the valve via fan 49. This laminar flow also serves to cool the general system environment. The viscous fluid at the dispense point (needle 22) is heated or cooled by the heat sink with closed loop feedback as previously described.

[0046] Precise, consistent control of the dispensed fluid mass is essential for the underfill process to be performed in optimum fashion. Too much fluid will overtop the chip 10 and not enough will result in an incomplete underfill. The dispensing and underfill tasks are further complicated because liquid epoxy has a relatively short pot life. Its viscosity may increase as much as one-hundred percent within four hours due to partial curing. To insure precise dispensing, our system incorporates two features, namely, a mass flow calibration feature (weigh scale 52 and weigh scale circuit 54) and a precision positive displacement pump (auger valve 25).

[0047] The mass flow calibration weigh scale 52 is preferably located next to the prime and purge station 51a. It weighs a variable amount of the viscous fluid dispensed over a predetermined time interval and is accurate to plus or minus one-half milligram. After the sample is weighed, the dispensing parameters are then adjusted to dispense the desired amount of fluid over the time required to execute the dispense pattern. The flow rate changes as the viscosity changes. Therefore the flow rate is automatically measured at user specified intervals and the X-Y speed of the needle 22 and/or speed of the valve 25 are adjusted to compensate for this change in viscosity.

[0048] In the underfill operation, the needle 22 dispenses viscous material along a predetermined pattern, e.g. an L-shaped fillet along two sides of the chip 10.

Capillary action draws the viscous fluid under the chip. After an appropriate dwell time to allow the adhesive to completely underfill the chip, the opposite sides of the chip are preferably perimeter filled with a smaller amount of fluid.

[0049] The system computer 30 can execute automatic fiducial alignment. The underfill process requires additional vision capabilities to accurately locate the chip 10 for placement and process control as well as accurate dispensing. This task is complicated by the wide variations in backside chip color and reflectivity as well as the similarity in appearance of the components to the solder mask on certain PC boards. To differentiate the chip 10 from the PC board 16, special lighting (not illustrated) may be incorporated into our system for visual contrast.

[0050] While we have described a preferred embodiment of our dispensing system and method, it should be apparent that modifications and adaptations thereof will occur to those skilled in the art. For example, our dispensing system may be utilized in connection with other work pieces besides PC boards and substrates utilized in the electronics industry. Therefore, the protection afforded our invention should only be limited in accordance with the scope of the following claims.

Embodiment 1. A system for dispensing a viscous material onto a substrate, comprising:

- a dispensing element;
- a viscous material reservoir;
- a metering device coupled between the reservoir and the dispensing element for metering a variable amount of a viscous material through the dispensing element;
- positioner means for moving the dispensing element along a predetermined pattern adjacent a surface of a substrate;
- a weigh scale adjacent the substrate for receiving a metered amount of the viscous material and producing signals representative of a weight of the material dispensed during a predetermined time interval; and
- control means for calculating a flow rate based on the signals from the weigh scale and for adjusting a speed of movement of the positioner means along the predetermined pattern to cause the dispensing element to dispense a desired amount of the material based on the calculated flow rate.

Embodiment 2. A system according to with the features of embodiment and further comprising means connected to the dispensing element for maintaining the temperature of the viscous material metered therethrough at a predetermined substantially constant temperature.

Embodiment 3. A system according to with the features of embodiment and further comprising non-contact heater means for maintaining the substrate at a predetermined substantially constant temperature.

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Embodiment 4. A system according to with the features of embodiment and further comprising prime and purge means adjacent the substrate for receiving the dispensing element and sucking viscous material therethrough to remove any air bubbles in the dispensing element and metering device.

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Embodiment 5. A system according to with the features of embodiment and further comprising a camera for producing an image of the substrate and generating video signals representative thereof, a vision circuit connected to the camera and control means connected between the vision circuit and the positioner means for locating an object on the substrate based on the video signals and for moving the dispensing element along the predetermined pattern adjacent the object.

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Embodiment 6. A system according to with the features of embodiment and further comprising a conveyor for moving the substrate along a predetermined path.

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Embodiment 7. A system according to with the features of embodiment wherein the dispensing element is a needle, the metering device is a motor driven positive displacement pump, and the reservoir is a syringe.

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Embodiment 8. A system according to with the features of embodiment and further comprising height sensing means for determining when the dispensing element is a predetermined distance from the surface of the substrate.

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Embodiment 9. A system according to with the features of embodiment and further comprising a fan and a fan controller for maintaining a predetermined airflow past the dispensing element.

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Embodiment 10. A system according to with the features of embodiment and further comprising a source of pressurized gas coupled to the viscous material reservoir for propelling viscous material therefrom to the metering device.

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Embodiment 11. A system for dispensing a viscous material onto a substrate, comprising:

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- a dispensing element;
- a viscous material reservoir;
- a metering device coupled between the

reservoir and the dispensing element for metering a variable amount of a viscous material through the dispensing element;

positioner means for moving the dispensing element along a predetermined pattern adjacent a surface of a substrate;

a weigh scale adjacent the substrate for receiving a metered amount of the viscous material and producing signals representative of a weight of the material dispensed during a predetermined time interval; and

control means for adjusting a rate of delivery of the metering device to cause the dispensing element to dispense a desired amount of the material along the predetermined pattern.

Embodiment 12. A system according to with the features of embodiment and further comprising means connected to the dispensing element for maintaining the temperature of the viscous material metered therethrough at a predetermined substantially constant temperature.

Embodiment 13. A system according to with the features of embodiment and further comprising non-contact heater means for maintaining the substrate at a predetermined substantially constant temperature.

Embodiment 14. A system according to with the features of embodiment and further comprising prime and purge means adjacent the substrate for receiving the dispensing element and sucking viscous material therethrough to remove any air bubbles in the dispensing element and metering device.

Embodiment 15. A system according to with the features of embodiment and further comprising a camera for producing an image of the substrate and generating video signals representative thereof, a vision circuit connected to the camera and control means connected between the vision circuit and the positioner means for locating an object on the substrate based on the video signals and for moving the dispensing element along the predetermined pattern adjacent the object.

Embodiment 16. A system according to with the features of embodiment and further comprising a conveyor for moving the substrate along a predetermined path.

Embodiment 17. A system according to with the features of embodiment wherein the dispensing element is a needle, the metering device is a motor driven positive displacement pump, and the reservoir is a syringe.

Embodiment 18. A system according to with the features of embodiment and further comprising height sensing means for determining when the dispensing element is a predetermined distance from the surface of the substrate.

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Embodiment 19. A system according to with the features of embodiment and further comprising a fan and a fan controller for maintaining a predetermined airflow past the dispensing element.

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Embodiment 20. A system according to with the features of embodiment wherein the metering device includes a positive displacement pump having a direct drive motor and the system further comprises a valve control circuit for detecting a back EMF of the motor to compensate for changes in viscosity of the viscous material.

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Embodiment 21. A system for dispensing a viscous material onto a substrate, comprising:

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a dispensing element;

a viscous material reservoir;

a metering device coupled between the reservoir and the dispensing element for metering a variable amount of a viscous material through the dispensing element;

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positioner means for moving the dispensing element and metering device along a predetermined pattern adjacent a surface of a substrate; first closed loop temperature control means connected to the dispensing element for maintaining the temperature of the viscous material metered therethrough at a first predetermined substantially constant temperature;

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second closed loop temperature control means for maintaining the substrate at a second predetermined substantially constant temperature; and

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motion controller means for adjusting a speed of movement and a direction of movement of the positioner means along the predetermined pattern to cause the dispensing element to dispense a predetermined amount of the material upon energizing the metering device at a predetermined substantially constant rate.

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Embodiment 22. A system according to with the features of embodiment wherein the dispensing element comprises a needle and the first closed loop temperature control means includes a heat sink surrounding the needle, a heater element mounted in the heat sink, a heat sensor mounted in the heat sink and a heater controller circuit connected to the heater element and heat sink.

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Embodiment 23. A system according to with the fea-

tures of embodiment wherein the second closed loop temperature control means includes a plurality of infrared emitting bulbs mounted for radiantly heating the substrate and a substrate heater controller circuit connected to the bulbs for energizing the bulbs.

Embodiment 24. A system according to with the features of embodiment and further comprising a weigh scale adjacent the substrate for receiving a variable amount of the viscous material and producing signals representative of a weight of the material dispensed during a predetermined time interval.

Embodiment 25. A system according to with the features of embodiment and further comprising a system computer connected to the weigh scale and the motion controller means for adjusting a speed of movement of the positioner means along the predetermined pattern to cause the dispensing element to dispense a desired amount of the material based on a flow rate calculated from the signals representative of the weight of the material dispensed during the predetermined time interval.

Embodiment 26. A system according to with the features of embodiment and further comprising valve control means for adjusting a rate of delivery of the metering device to cause the dispensing element to dispense a desired amount of the material along the predetermined pattern.

Embodiment 27. A system according to with the features of embodiment and further comprising prime and purge means adjacent the substrate for receiving the dispensing element and sucking viscous material therethrough to remove any air bubbles in the dispensing element and metering device.

Embodiment 28. A system according to with the features of embodiment and further comprising a camera for producing a image of the substrate and generating video signals representative thereof, a vision circuit connected to the camera and a system computer connected to the vision circuit for locating an object on the substrate based on the video signals, and for commanding the positioner means through the motion controller means to move the dispensing element along the predetermined pattern adjacent the object.

Embodiment 29. A system according to with the features of embodiment wherein the metering device includes a positive displacement pump having a direct drive motor and the system further comprises a valve control circuit for detecting a back EMF of the motor to compensate for changes in viscosity of the viscous material.

Embodiment 30. A system according to with the features of embodiment and further comprising a heat shield adjacent the dispensing element for deflecting heat from the second closed loop temperature control means.

Embodiment 31. A method of underfilling a space between a semiconductor flip chip and a substrate to completely encapsulate a plurality of solder bumps and solder pads with a viscous liquid material, comprising the steps of:

providing a positive displacement pump for metering a variable amount of a viscous material from a reservoir connected to the pump through a dispensing element connected to the pump; maintaining the dispensing element at a first substantially constant temperature; maintaining the substrate at a second substantially constant temperature; metering a first variable amount of viscous material dispensed through the element onto a weigh scale during a predetermined time interval and measuring a weight thereof; calculating a predetermined flow rate based upon the predetermined time interval and the measured weight; and moving the dispensing element along at least one side edge of a flip chip mounted on a substrate and dispensing a second desired amount of viscous material based on the calculated flow rate sufficient to completely encapsulate a plurality of solder bumps and solder pads without overflowing an upper side of the chip.

Embodiment 32. A method according to with the features of embodiment wherein the second desired amount of material is dispensed by controlling a speed of movement of the dispensing element relative to the chip while maintaining a substantially constant delivery rate of the positive displacement pump.

Embodiment 33. A method according to with the features of embodiment wherein the second desired amount of material is dispensed by adjusting a speed of the positive displacement pump while maintaining a substantially constant speed of movement of the dispensing element relative to the chip.

Embodiment 34. A method according to with the features of embodiment wherein the first variable amount of material is periodically dispensed and weighed to recalculate the flow rate and the speed of movement of the dispensing element is adjusted to account for variations in the viscosity of the material to thereby insure that the second desired

amount of material is repeatedly dispensed.

Embodiment 35. A method according to with the features of embodiment wherein the first variable amount of material is periodically dispensed and weighed to recalculate the flow rate and the speed of the positive displacement pump is adjusted to insure that the second desired amount of material is repeatedly dispensed.

Claims

1. A system for dispensing a viscous material onto a substrate, comprising:

a dispensing element;

a viscous material reservoir;

a metering device coupled between the reservoir and the dispensing element for metering a variable amount of a viscous material through the dispensing element;

positioner means for moving the dispensing element and metering device along a predetermined pattern adjacent a surface of a substrate; first closed loop temperature control means connected to the dispensing element for maintaining the temperature of the viscous material metered therethrough at a first predetermined substantially constant temperature;

second closed loop temperature control means for maintaining the substrate at a second predetermined substantially constant temperature; and

motion controller means for adjusting a speed of movement and a direction of movement of the positioner means along the predetermined pattern to cause the dispensing element to dispense a predetermined amount of the material upon energizing the metering device at a predetermined substantially constant rate.

2. A system according to Claim 1 wherein the dispensing element comprises a needle and the first closed loop temperature control means includes a heat sink surrounding the needle, a heater element mounted in the heat sink, a heat sensor mounted in the heat sink and a heater controller circuit connected to the heater element and heat sink.

3. A system according to Claim 1 wherein the second closed loop temperature control means includes a plurality of infrared emitting bulbs mounted for radiantly heating the substrate and a substrate heater controller circuit connected to the bulbs for energizing the bulbs.

4. A system according to Claim 1 and further compris-

ing a weigh scale adjacent the substrate for receiving a variable amount of the viscous material and producing signals representative of a weight of the material dispensed during a predetermined time interval.

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5. A system according to Claim 1 and further comprising a System computer connected to the weigh scale and the motion controller means for adjusting a speed of movement of the positioner means along the predetermined pattern to cause the dispensing element to dispense a desired amount of the material based on a flow rate calculated from the signals representative of the weight of the material dispensed during the predetermined time interval. 10 15
6. A system according to Claim 1 and further comprising valve control means for adjusting a rate of delivery of the metering device to cause the dispensing element to dispense a desired amount of the material along the predetermined pattern. 20
7. A System according to Claim 1 and further comprising prime and purge means adjacent the substrate for receiving the dispensing element and sucking viscous material therethrough to remove any air bubbles in the dispensing element and metering device. 25
8. A System according to Claim 1 and further comprising a camera for producing a image of the substrate and generating video signals representative thereof, a Vision circuit connected to the camera and a system computer connected to the vision circuit for locating an object on the substrate based on the video signals, and for commanding the positioner means through the motion controller means to move the dispensing element along the predetermined pattern adjacent the object. 30 35 40
9. A System according to Claim 1 wherein the metering device includes a positive displacement pump having a direct drive motor and the system further comprises a valve control circuit for detecting a back EMF of the motor to compensate for changes in viscosity of the viscous material. 45
10. A system according to Claim 1 and further comprising a heat shield adjacent the dispensing element for deflecting heat from the second closed loop temperature control means. 50

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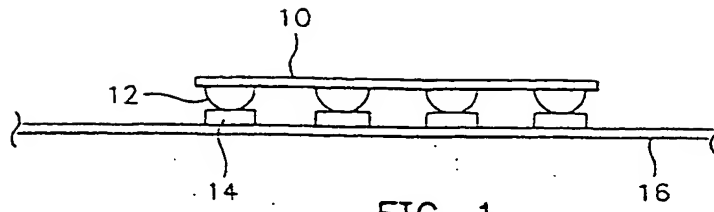


FIG. 1
(PRIOR ART)

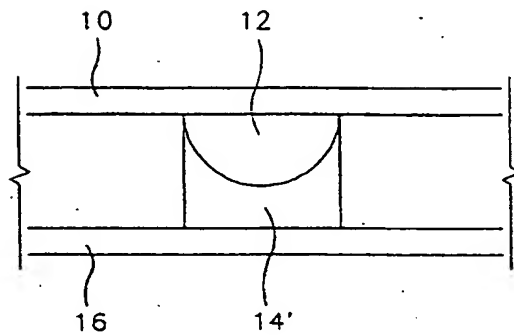


FIG. 2
(PRIOR ART)

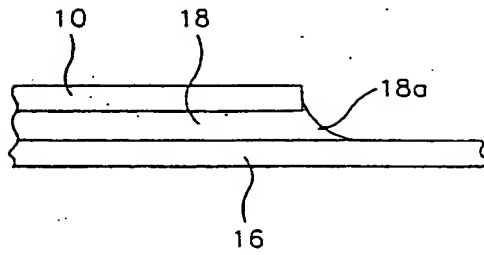


FIG. 3
(PRIOR ART)

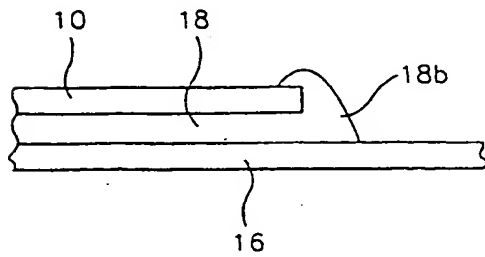


FIG. 4
(PRIOR ART)

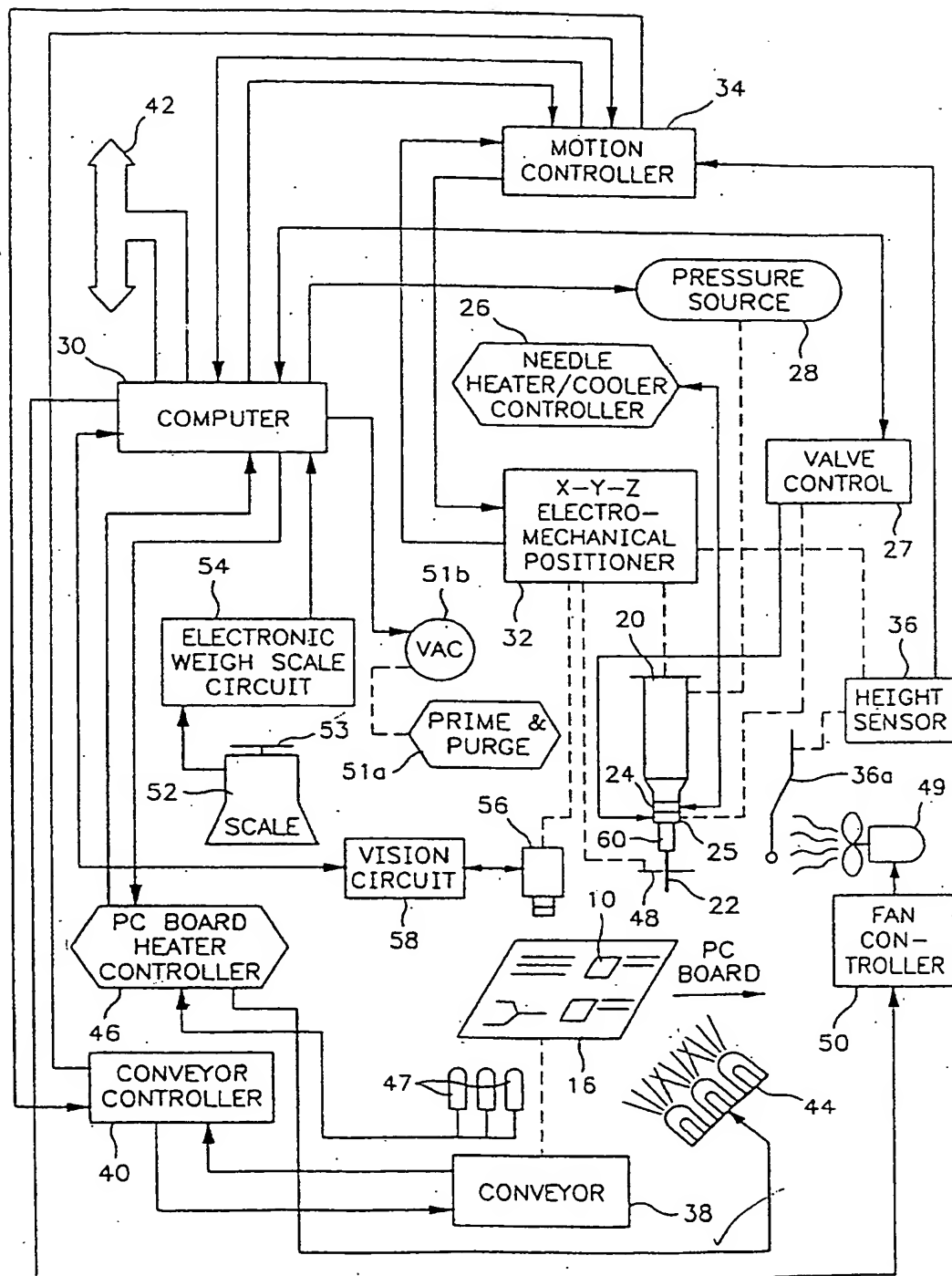


FIG. 5